

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS.

CIRCULAR No. 13.

JULY 30, 1891.

LETTERS FROM CLERGYMEN OF AUSTIN.

As certain ill-informed persons are industriously circulating false and injurious reports in regard to the character of the professors and the conduct of the students of the University of Texas, it has been concluded to issue as a Circular some letters written by the pastors of the several evangelical churches of Austin, in answer to a letter of inquiry from the Chairman of the Faculty, in order that the friends of the University and of Higher Education may know the exact facts in the case.

It is further considered that if these reports are allowed to go unchallenged and uncontradicted, irreparable harm may be done, not so much to the University, which will survive all such attacks, but to the young men and young women of Texas that may be influenced by them at the present time. A liberal education without charge for tuition is, through the bounty of the State, within the reach of the sons and daughters of the citizens of Texas, and it is not right that uncontradicted reports, alleging that the professors of the University are irreligious men and that the students are uncontrolled and undisciplined, should keep them away from its lecture rooms.

For the above reasons the following letters are published in this circular:

I. LETTER FROM REV. T. B. LEE.

AUSTIN, Texas, December 29, 1890.

MY DEAR SIR—In reply to your letter I would state that, so far as my observation goes (and it is by no means limited) I have never known a set of students to conduct themselves better than those now attending our University. In the sad and exceptional case of Mr. Bonner, it is only right for me to say that he was in the company of one of our city young men, and was warned by one of his fellow students, if he wished to retain their respect, not to go about with the young man he was with. Alas! to no purpose. But “*de mortuis nil nisi bonum.*”

He is in God's hands. If the students either gamble or are guilty of immorality or other vices, I don't know it; and I have not heard of their doing anything which would reflect against them. Many of them I know well, and they are always welcome at my house. With regard to the professors, five of them attend the services at St. David's; and from my knowledge of those who do not, I must be pardoned if I refrain from expressing an opinion of men for whom as a Christian minister I have the highest respect. May every university be blessed with such a faculty as I believe we have in our institution.

I regret that any one should try to hinder the prosperity of the University by circulating slanderous reports as to the morals of either professors or students, which they cannot prove. In our Blessed Lord's words, I can but say, "An enemy hath done this."

Hoping that God's blessing may ever rest upon both professors and students, and wishing the University of Texas every success, believe me to be, as one of its warmest friends,

THOS. B. LEE,
Rector of St. David's (Episcopal) Church.

2. LETTER FROM REV. DR. R. K. SMOOT.

AUSTIN, Texas, December, 29, 1890.

MY DEAR DR. WAGGENER—Your note of recent date is before me this morning. It has pained me no little to know that in the very face of facts to the contrary the enemies of our State University have persisted in circulating reports both false and injurious. I have been a decided friend of the University from the day of its opening, and also a close observer of its progress to the present time. I have known personally most of the professors and have found them to be men of great natural ability, fine scholarship, and high moral and religious principles. Almost every orthodox denomination of Christians has been and is now represented in the Faculty. Many students of the University attend my preaching and some of them have united with my church.

My observation leaves me to believe the students are notably free from that dissipation and those vicious practices which characterize many older institutions of learning.

R. K. SMOOT,
Pastor Southern Presbyterian Church and Chaplain of the Senate,

3. LETTER FROM REV. R. B. GARRETT.

AUSTIN, Texas, December 30, 1890.

DR. LESLIE WAGGENER, DEAR BRO.—Yours of twenty-eighth inst., received and contents noted. In reply I would state that I have lived in Austin since August, 1889, and within two blocks of the University the whole of that time. This has necessarily brought the institution under my immediate notice, and brought me into daily contact with many of the students and professors. I believe I am personally acquainted with all of the professors except one, and it gives me pleasure to state that I have found them to be courteous, Christian gentlemen. I believe it is generally known that every member of the faculty except two is a member of some evangelical church. It may not be so generally known that many of them are men of earnest piety and zeal, actively engaged in Christian work in the churches to which they belong. As to the students, I do not believe that there is a college in the land, secular or denominational, which has a more quiet and orderly set of students than the Texas State University. A large number of them are regular attendants of our church and Sunday school, and last session twenty-six of them connected themselves with the church of which I am pastor. Of course there are some exceptions to the rule. It would be strange indeed if in so large a number there were not some inclined to be wild and wayward ; but I can testify, from personal knowledge, that any departure from the strict path of gentlemanly conduct which comes to the knowledge of the faculty receives their prompt attention. Taking it all in all, I should not hesitate to commend heartily this institution to any father wishing for his son or daughter the benefits of higher education ; and I should not hesitate to assure them that the perils which beset the youth here are no greater than in any other average college town.

R. B. GARRETT,
Pastor First Baptist Church.

4. LETTER FROM REV. E. B. CHAPPELL.

AUSTIN, January 5, 1891.

DR. LESLIE WAGGENER, MY DEAR SIR:—Pardon my delay in answering your note received several days since ; and do not if you please, interpret it as indicating any hesitation on my part about complying with your polite and reasonable request.

I take pleasure in expressing my high regard for the faculty of the University of Texas. A more upright, noble, and gentlemanly body of men, I am sure, could not be found anywhere. So far as there is power in personal character, their influence over the young men must be salutary. That reports reflecting on the character of such men should have gained credence is to me incomprehensible ; and I shall take pleasure in doing whatever I can to correct so unjust and unreasonable a mistake.

Of course I cannot speak with equal confidence concerning the students, since my acquaintance with them is necessarily quite limited. Among those whom I know, however, are many earnest, studious and worthy young men; so that I feel sure that in this regard you are up to the average of first class American colleges. My observation leads me to believe that more of your pupils are being injured by overwork than by "idleness and dissipation."

E. G. CHAPPELL,
Pastor Tenth Street Methodist Church.

5. LETTER FROM REV. J. P. PINKERTON.

AUSTIN, Texas, January 12, 1891.

PROF. LESLIE WAGGENER, STATE UNIVERSITY, MY DEAR SIR:—
Your favor of recent date asking the result of my observation in reference to a report which you understand has gained currency throughout the State to effect that "the Faculty of the University are generally infidels and immoral men, and that the students are allowed to indulge with impunity in vicious habits and idle amusements," to hand and carefully noted. I have not seen, nor do I know of anything that would justify so sweeping a charge. As to the religious status of the faculty I know that several of them are members of the church and active participants in its operations ; that all of them are gentlemen of unquestioned morals I have every reason to believe.

I feel assured that as far as they can exert influence and exercise discipline it is to restrain the students from pernicious indulgences and promote diligence in all college duties.

If I may be allowed to designate you personally, I take pleasure in saying that you have been especially active in your co-operation with the city preachers in their efforts to secure the attendance of students upon religious services, and to surround them with religious influences and safeguards.

J. P. PINKERTON,
Pastor Christian Church.

6. LETTER FROM REV. DR. E. B. WRIGHT.

AUSTIN, Texas, January 15, 1891.

DR. LESLIE WAGGENER, CHAIRMAN OF FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS, MY DEAR SIR:—It gives me pleasure to testify that the citizens of Austin know the professors of the State University to be not only gentlemen but in large majority professing Christians whose conduct exemplifies their profession. It is greatly to be regretted if any reports to the contrary have gone abroad, and as one of the pastors of the city I am glad to pronounce such reports slanderous upon a noble set of men, whose example is of benefit not only to the students, but I believe to the people at large, and who evidently take a heartfelt interest in the welfare of the students.

And as to the students of the University, as far as their behavior has come under my observation or to my knowledge, it has been that of orderly, hightoned young men who would be known anywhere as gentlemen. Anything like rowdyism seems to be unknown in the Texas State University. I desire to add that the interests of the University are regularly remembered in public prayer in the church of which I am pastor.

EDWARD B. WRIGHT,
Pastor First Presbyterian Church.

If it is necessary to add further testimony to that given in the above letters, reference is made to His Excellency, Governor Jas. S. Hogg, to the Hon. H. C. Pritchett, Superintendent Public Instruction, to the heads of the various departments, to the principals and superintendents of the several State institutions, to the members of the Twenty-second Legislature, to the students and ex-students of the University, and to the patrons of the University throughout the State of Texas.

LESLIE WAGGENER,
Chairman of the Faculty.

